

SUCCESS STORIES

Alaskan Youth Stand Up Speak Up

Public Health Problem (Issue)

Alaska's youth are being raped at rates up to three times higher than the rest of the country. In the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 10.1% (7.2% of male and 11.3% female) of Alaska's traditional high school students were forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want it, as opposed to 8.9% of students across the country. These numbers increase for Alaska's alternative high school students with 11.3% of the males, and 29.1% of the females reporting being physically forced to have sexual intercourse, for a total of 20.3%. But Alaska's youth are getting involved by standing up and speaking up. Working together, Alaska's teens are building safer, stronger communities.

Taking Action (Intervention)

The Stand Up, Speak Up! multimedia campaign is part of a larger violence prevention effort. It was developed to help youth identify their role in promoting safe and respectful relationships to prevent sexual and teen dating violence. Established in conjunction with State, non-profit and youth organizations, it includes media messages for TV, an interactive website, posters, bus signs, and small media materials. The Stand Up, Speak Up! campaign is used to draw teens into the mini-grants that support local youth leadership activities. Alaskan youth say the campaign has:

- Increased their awareness of the problem
- Improved their understanding of what they can do, and
- Helped them take action.

When asked how they are making change in their communities, teens talk about how they promote respect and end violence with very specific approaches that reflect a deep understanding of the Stand Up, Speak Up! objectives. Community teen projects funded by the mini-grants include working with elders in cultural activities, planning outdoor wilderness programs to increase leadership, mentoring, sponsoring community forums for youth and adults, and hosting a radio show. The Teens Acting Against Violence in Bethel expanded this campaign to a series entitled, "When I Am An Elder", with messages being recorded and produced by youth in Bethel and Barrow for statewide airing.

Impact

The Stand Up Speak Up! campaign was launched in the spring 2010, with an evaluation conducted that summer. Major findings suggested that all youth surveyed had an overall understanding and recognition of the Stand Up, Speak

Quote

"When I am an elder I want to know the cycles of salmon, not the cycles of violence." - Heather Kanuk, 16, Kipnuk, Alaska

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Up! campaign. The youth really liked the use of Alaskan youth in the advertising and materials. They also like short catchy phrases or slogans, like "respect," representing an effective branding and messaging strategy. The results show that Stand Up Speak Up! is having a positive impact. This is reflected in the 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey results, which show that the number of Alaska's traditional high school students who were forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want it dropped by 8.6% over 2009. Even more exciting is that alternative school students saw a 33.6% decrease in these numbers. These encouraging findings suggest that the Stand Up, Speak Up! is getting through the communication clutter that teens experience. The program can be relatively sure that the youth who are involved and engaged in youth leadership are acting in new and healthy ways.

Footnotes

The [Alaska Health Education Library Project](#) is an electronic clearinghouse of current health promotion and health education resources that are specific to and available in Alaska. It contains information on health promotion programs, projects and materials and more. All information stored is publicly available.

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